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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LAGOS 000447

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STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR INR/AA
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: OGUN STATE: PDP SUGGESTS TRY HARDER NEXT TIME, AS
OBSERVERS LOOK TO THE FUTURE

REF: 06 LAGOS 1364

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Classified By: Consul Alan B. C. Latimer for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (C) Summary: In Ogun State, the bitter aftermath of the elections brought garlands for the victors and disappointment for supporters of free and fair elections. The ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) believe they have ushered in a new wave of reform in the state and argue the opposition forces are resistant to change. Independent observers commented that the Ogun State populace voted en masse for the opposition but widespread fraud and manipulation accounted for the PDP's victory. Some observers forecasted the next election would likely be an even rougher and more violent affair. End summary.

PDP View: Conflict Connected to Changing the State

12. (C) Poloff visited Ogun State on May 22. Kayode Samuel, Chief of Staff and Press Secretary to Ogun State Governor Gbenga Daniel, evaluated the recent election, claiming that "after a bitterly fought election, connected to the change of the face of the State", the PDP emerged victorious. Samuel attributed the conflict to Daniel's efforts to change the state from a civil service base to a business-oriented one. These governmental changes, according to Samuel, meant "stepping on toes" in order to change the socialist "pro-(Obafemi) Awolowo mindset". This did not involve an actual reduction in the size of the civil service, but rather a change in their mindset. Having come to power in 2003, the PDP was a relative newcomer to the state, Samuel opined. (Note: While the Daniel administration can point to some achievements, many of them are continuations of programs that the previous administration launched. Daniel has also enjoyed an unprecedented flow of money into the state owing to the favor of native son Obasanjo. End note)

13. (C) The opposition had to resort to desperate measures to seize power, Samuel remarked. The opposition attempted to disqualify Daniel on corruption charges, most notably in the accounting scandal which rocked the state in January. Daniel removed 11 accountants for presenting vouchers, reportedly showing corruption, to Action Congress (AC) candidate Dipo Dina. Samuel defended Daniel's action, saying the problem can be attributed to the accountants revealing government vouchers that should not have been put in the public domain for scrutiny. Asked if the government believed in transparency with the public, Samuel bristled that while government should be transparent, accountants could still not leave the original vouchers of government for public view. Samuel then complained that international observers should give Nigeria credit for its accomplishments rather than try to judge the country by unrealistic standards.

PDP Involved in a "Do or die" Battle for Survival

14. (C) Once the opposition failed to disqualify Daniel, they had no other strategy left, Samuel noted. There was no reason to work outside the political system, while the PDP holds power. The opposition has been divided and continues to fail to unite. Samuel saw Nigerian politics moving to a two-party state. While the Governor had no plans for a unity government, the election provided "ample lessons" for the opposition, Samuel noted. Samuel defended President Obasanjo's much criticized statement, referring to the elections as a "do or die affair", remarking that the PDP was unified only by Obasanjo's personality and without his presence the party was in real danger of splintering. (Comment: Samuel's curious statement takes the current political situation and turns it on its head. However, in a

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way it does reflect a sentiment that to Samuel and others justified the widespread manipulation and vote fraud in the April elections. End comment)

15. (C) President Umaru Yar'Adua is a compromise candidate acceptable to all factions. Obasanjo perceived Yar'Adua as a maverick rather than a follower of mainstream thought, Samuel opined. Samuel noted that while Yar'Adua will lead, Obasanjo would remain a guiding hand, as Nigerian society craved strong men. As for free and fair elections, Samuel proposed that the idea of "one man, one vote is still evolving" in Nigeria.

16. (U) Samuel was effusive in describing the budding investment interests in the state, claiming thirty Chinese enterprises had made investments. Samuel thought the Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) plant shared with Ondo state and developed by Shell, Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC), British Gas, and Chevron, would bring significant revenue to Ogun in 2009.

Election Had Some Problems but Acceptable

17. (C) Tunde Kuku, Director of the American Corner and a confidant of the Governor, dismissed the opposition's complaints as the criticism of a frustrated minority. Kuku said the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) tried to hold free elections, but security was a problem at the voting stations, particularly in Abeokuta South. While the elections had a problem in a few wards, it would not have made any difference, as people were committed to vote for Daniel. In the presidential election people did not bother to come out, but overall the election results were acceptable to most people, and anyway those who were dissatisfied could contest the results at the election tribunal. Kuku discounted reports the opposition had taped election violence

and malfeasance, claiming the tapes were taken in only one location.

Election a Display of Arrogance of Power

¶18. (C) Kehinde Kolawole, Chair of the Community Human Rights and Advocacy Center, characterized the election as "not a selection, but a display of arrogance of power". While the Daniel administration touted its record of achievement, people saw only his cronies benefiting from the administration's efforts. Daniel knew he could not win a free and fair election, Kolawole reasoned. Kolawole, who also worked as an ad hoc supervisor for INEC, said he had hoped for a free and fair election based on the administration's anti-corruption campaign. However, what he saw on election-day made him "sick in heart and body". Bribes were given freely, INEC workers received 1000 naira (approximately \$8), higher INEC officials received 5000 naira, and some security officers were offered "10,000 naira or take a bullet".

¶19. (C) After the election, Ogun did not experience mass protest or violence. However, there was a pervasive depression, Kolawole said. After the opposition invested a lot of effort into the campaign, he expected the opposition to present a formidable case to the election tribunal. According to Kolawole, when Obasanjo met a group of elders who congratulated him on his party's victory in Ogun, the President told the elders it was too early to celebrate because All Nigeria People's Party (ANPP) candidate Ibikunle Amosun had collected a massive amount of evidence to prove election rigging.

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Post-election, Armed Gangs Roam the State

¶10. (C) The PDP spent liberally, Kolawole noted, and some armed gangs have begun to use the guns and cutlasses issued to them before the elections for robberies. Compared to the previous two elections, the 2007 elections were more brutish, and in 2011 promised an opposition prepared to treat 2011 as war, Kolawole opined. Civil society relaxed its guard after 1999, and thought the military was the enemy. While the future is uncertain, the current course is unsustainable and would lead to more turmoil, Kolawole commented.

¶11. (C) Segun Adeleye, correspondent for the Daily Independent, concurred that the voting irregularities were terrible and added that results had to be cancelled in Obasanjo's ward. In Ogun, people behaved as if "a baby had been stolen". Adeleye commented that while the public focused on moral and material corruption, he considered the electoral malfeasance that took place much worse. In Lagos State, the election results were received differently because after the announcement people came out and showed their jubilation for AC candidate Babatunde Fashola's victory and relief the PDP did not win, Adeleye noted.

While People Anxiously Await the
Tribunal, No Protests Are Planned

¶12. (C) Kolawole said international observers helped in condemning the election, but any further effort to overturn the election result was up to Nigerians. In this election, people condemned the results, but then continued with business as usual, Kolawole noted. Adeleye remarked that some feared that if there were mass protests, the military could return to power. Kolawole predicted the results of the tribunal would depend on the caliber of the judges chosen.

He noted that while people were anxious to see what would happen, whatever the result they were unwilling to protest. Even the ANPP candidate Amosun said he would leave the tribunal's judgment to the people and their conscience, Adeleye noted.

Comment

[¶13.](#) (C) Ogun, because of its status as Obasanjo's home state, was always considered unlikely to turn to the opposition. Our interlocutors describe a state that is in the PDP's grip.

The Daniel administration will go through the motions but provide little real hope for electoral reform. The opposition has yet to throw in the towel and appears ready to amass evidence to embarrass the PDP at the electoral tribunal, but it does not have a plan if the tribunals fail to produce a favorable decision.

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